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# Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

Superior Court of Arizona ♥ Maricopa County Juvenile Division  
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## A CHILD'S VOICE IN COURT

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### Facts About Special Immigrant Juvenile Status Immigrant Legal Resource Center

What is special immigrant juvenile status? It is a way for a dependent of a juvenile court to become a permanent resident of the United States (get a "green card"). See 9 USC§1101(a)(27)(J), INA§(a)(27)(J) and the federal regulation at 8 CFR 201.11.

What are the benefits and risks of applying? A successful applicant will become a lawful permanent resident, with the right to remain lawfully in the United States, work legally, qualify for in-state tuition at college, and in five years apply for U.S. citizenship. If the application is denied, however, the child might be deported.

What are the requirements for special immigrant juvenile status? A juvenile court in the United States must have declared the child a court dependent, or legally committed the child to a state agency or department. The court must have ruled that the child is "deemed eligible for long term foster care" (which in this context means that parental reunification is not possible), and that it is not in the child's best interest to be returned to the home country. The child should proceed or have proceeded to long term foster care, adoption, or guardianship. The court must have these findings based on the abuse, neglect or abandonment of the child. It is possible that in the future the INS also will require the court to contact it during the dependency hearing; to keep abreast of new developments, contact the ILRC as instructed on the opposite page.

What is the procedure for applying? The child, case worker, or attorney can complete the application, which will be submitted to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The child must complete INS forms, obtain a special medical exam, and provide fingerprints, a photograph, and proof of age. The application must include an order from a

dependency court making the findings set out in the paragraph above. The application costs a few hundred dollars in fees, but a fee waiver is available. The INS will grant the applicant employment authorization immediately upon filing of the application, and schedule a date for the SIJS interview in the future. The INS generally will decide the case at the SIJS interview.

When must the child apply, and how long does the process take? It might take from 6-18 months after submitting the application to get an SIJS interview. *This is why it is critical to apply for SIJS as soon as possible, so that the case may be resolved while the child still is a juvenile court dependent.* If the child is emancipated before the interview, current INS policy is to deny the case. It is possible that the INS will make this policy less strict in the future.

What cases carry a risk of being denied? Applicants who are HIV positive, who have been deported in the past, who have juvenile delinquency or adult criminal records, who are almost at the point of emancipation, or who could be diagnosed as having a mental condition posing a threat to self or others *might* be required to file a waiver or face potential denial. Competent representation often makes the difference: applications should not be filed without first obtaining expert assistance and evaluation.

Technical assistance: The Immigrant Legal Resource Center provides free information and consultation on individual cases, materials, and training. For more information or assistance regarding INS, please contact CASA volunteer Judy Flanagan at 667-6200.

*The above information was provided by CASA Volunteer Judy Flanagan. Thank you Judy.*

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## Fetal Alcohol Syndrome On Fast Track

by Dru Wilson  
Knight Ridder Newspapers  
*Reprint from AZ Republic.*

Dramatic increase in drinking noted in pregnant women. Many women in today's social whirl may have a beer or glass of wine after work; some may be aware of warnings on the labels that say drinking can harm a pregnant woman's unborn child.

What some women still don't realize, however, is how little alcohol it takes to cause damage, and how early in the pregnancy it can happen.

A drink a day -- possibly even before a woman knows she's pregnant -- could mean the difference between having a healthy baby and one doomed to a lifetime of learning and behavioral problems associated with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) or fetal alcohol effects, says Teddi Roberts, program coordinator for the Colorado Springs Chapter of The Arc., an organization for mental retardation.

It doesn't matter whether it's beer, wine or hard liquor, no one form is less potent than the other. In that regard, FAS is non-discriminating: Neither economic nor racial status make a difference, and it can affect the baby of a social drinker or an alcoholic.

A study published this month in the journal *Obstetrics and Gynecology* reports a dramatic increase in drinking among pregnant women.

In 1995, four times as many pregnant women frequently consumed alcohol as in 1991. Frequent drinking is defined as having at least seven drinks in one week or at least five on one occasion. The number of pregnant women consuming any amount of alcohol rose as well, increasing more than 60 percent from mid-1992 to 1995, says the study conducted by researchers at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta.

The findings are based on surveys of more than 138,000 women between 1988 and 1995. It is an expanded version of a study published last year in the CDC's "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report."

Although statistics vary on how much alcohol it takes to harm a fetus, Roberts, of the Colorado Springs Chapter of The Arc, points out that FAS "is 100 percent preventable. Simply don't drink while you are pregnant or possibly could get pregnant."

At least one study has shown an increased risk of miscarriage, or children born with kidney and cardiac problems associated with the mother having as few as four drinks a week.

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"We simply don't know what a safe level (of alcohol) is. It can vary depending on the chemical and physical characteristics of individual women," says Dr. Sharon Davis, director of The Arc's national office.

Fetal alcohol syndrome is the name given a variety of severe physical and mental birth defects, and fetal alcohol effects (FAE) is an array of less-severe defects. Both are caused by women drinking during pregnancy.

In FAS, the effects are obvious in the deformed physical features of the child, particularly through the face. The children also are generally small in stature and severely mentally retarded.

In FAE, the symptoms are more subtle. The child may have attention-deficit disorder, behavioral problems or a slow mental and physical development compared with peers, says April Montgomery, epidemiologist and coordinator for the Colorado birth defects monitoring project.

Babies with FAE may have erratic sleep patterns and difficulty being consoled, which prevents bonding between mother and child.

By middle-school age, it may manifest itself as bad behavior, such as acting on impulse, poor decision-making abilities, problems with boundaries and poor peer relationships, because FAS children mature slower.

For parents, natural or adoptive, caring for a FAS or FAE child with a multitude of physical and mental problems can be difficult.

Surgery corrected some of the deformity in her hands, but nothing can reconstruct Janice Benson's brain, which was damaged by FAS, says her father, Dave Benson, a Colorado Springs occupational therapist.

Janice, 25, has slurred speech that is sometimes hard for even her father to understand. She has poor cognitive skills and difficulty processing even the simplest information.

Benson was a single dad with two other children and was serving as an Air Force officer in Mississippi when he adopted Janice. Janice had spent her first four years of life in foster care because her mother had been on drugs and alcohol when Janice was born.

"I was told I should not adopt her because she would be an institutional child," Benson says. "I did not see that in her. As an occupational therapist, I believe a child should be as independent as possible."

Janice lives in a group home and is preparing to start a volunteer job.

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## CASA SPONSORED TRAINING

**December 3, 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m., Court Report**

**Writing** - All CASAs need to sign up for one Court Report Writing training. Presenters: Maricopa CASA Program Staff. Location: Juvenile Court - Southeast, 1810 S. Lewis, Saguaro Room. Please RSVP to the CASA Office 506-4083 by 11-27-98.

**December 9, 5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., CASAs Become**

**Model Advocates - CASAs Role in the New Model Court System** - Presented by Judge Albrecht and Noreen Sharp. Location: Juvenile Court Southeast Facility, 1810 S. Lewis Street, Mesa - Saguaro Room. RSVP by 12-2 at the CASA Office 506-4083

## SATELLITE TRAINING

**January 22, 1999, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. PST,**

**Integrating the Professional in Child Maltreatment**

**Cases** - Washington State CASA presents a nationwide participatory satellite training. This training focuses on a multiple maltreatment case illustrating the long term neurological impact on the child. Dr. Marcellus will be joined by a CASA and a CASA program attorney to discuss the CASA role as an advocate in these egregious cases. Locations to be announced.

## COMMUNITY SPONSORED TRAINING

**December 9-10, Fourteenth Annual Indian Child and Family Conference, Strength of Indian Families in the New Millennium: The "Cultural Internet"** - The goal of the conference is to provide an opportunity for innovative and critical thinking in a new era of human services for tribal governments. For more information please contact Star Dosahwe InterTribal Council of AZ., Inc. 248-0071.

## CONFERENCES

**January 7 & 8, 1999, Tenth Annual Child Abuse**

**Prevention Conference "A Decade of Progress - A**

**Lifetime of Commitment"** - 40 Workshops and seminars on: Early Brain Development, 1999 Legislative Issues, Family Violence Prevention, Child Protection Teams, Home Visiting, Child Advocacy Centers. Location: Sheraton Mesa Hotel & Community Center. Register early and save! Postmarked by Dec. 1: \$130.00, Postmarked after Dec. 1: \$145.00, Postmarked after Dec. 21: \$160.00. For more information contact: Child Abuse Prevention Conference '99, POB 432, Prescott, AZ 86302. FAX (520)778-5300, E-mail: [pca@northlink.com](mailto:pca@northlink.com)

January 18-21, 1999, Community Action for Prevention - Sponsored by Child Abuse Prevention Conference. Cost: Call Contact at 520-445-1807. Location: Mesa, AZ.

## Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **LETS GO TO THE THEATER!**

Phoenix Theater's Children's Theater, The Cookie Company, is making available to our CASA children ten seats for each performance of this year's season. Two-weeks advance notice is required and availability is on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you are interested in any of the performances, please call the Phoenix Theater box office at 254-5121. Tickets will be released for sale 15 minutes prior to curtain if they are not picked up.

X'Mas In OZ - December 1, 1998 - Tues. 7 p.m. Preview  
Magical Magpie - February 2, 1999 - Tues. 7 p.m. Preview  
Heidi - March 23, 1999 - Tues. 7 p.m. Preview

### **INTERNATIONAL CHRISTMAS XVII**

**November 30 - December 18, Weekdays at Noon** - The 18th annual festival of ethnic Christmas trees, Santa carvings, ethnic dolls and Creché collection. Location: Bank One Center, 201 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, (Central Avenue at Van Buren Street). Cost is free. Contact: Jo Ann Johnson, (602)221-1005.

## RESOURCES

### **HEALTHGATE**

This site gives you access to several medical databases.  
<http://www.healthgate.com/HealthGate/MEDLINE/search.shtml>

### **MENTAL HEALTH NET**

<http://www.cmhc.com> This is a complete guide to mental health resources on the Internet. The site gives resources and provides sections dedicated to various disorders and illnesses.

### **RXLIST**

<http://www.rxlist.com> This online drug index allows you to look up a drug by either generic or brand name, find out about possible side effects, read about clinical studies and find out about any warnings.

### **HEALTH GUIDE**

<http://www.healthguide.com> This site contains information on conditions such as ADHD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Bipolar Disorder.

### **PARENTS & EDUCATORS RESOURCE**

<http://www.perc-schwabfdn.org> This site has information about ADHD, dyslexia, speech and language delays and other subjects related to learning disabilities.

### **THE MERCK'S MANUAL**

<http://www.merck.com/%21%21slm8931qHsIMAB2UUN/pubs> This site contains a medical dictionary. You can find information about thousands of different conditions.

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 Court Report Writing 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m. SEF Saguario Rm - 1810 S. Lewis, Mesa RSVP by 11-27	4	5
6	7	8	9 CASAs Become Model Advocates 5:30 -9:00 p.m. SEF, Saguario Rm, 1810 S. Lewis St. Mesa RSVP by 12-2 @ 506-4083	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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### Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Characteristics of a child with fetal alcohol syndrome may include:

- Low birth weight and failure to catch up to peers in physical growth.
- Small head size, narrow eye slits, flat midface
- Mental retardation.
- Alcohol withdrawal at birth, possibly manifested in seizures.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Restlessness, irritability.
- Short attention span.
- Developmental delays and learning disabilities.
- Physical deformities in joints or poor muscle development.
- Genital, heart and kidney defects.

## COMMENDATIONS

### CASA VOLUNTEER STAR IS BORN

Congratulations to **Carolyn Ford** for her national coverage in the December issue of Good Housekeeping magazine. Carolyn took the time to meet with a reporter and photographer from the magazine to talk about the CASA program and what CASA means to children and volunteers. Thanks, Carolyn for your dedication and support. On a much smaller scale, we thank Carolyn for representing CASA at the November Honeywell Volunteers of Arizona Volunteer Fair. Our presence in the community is critical to our recruitment success and we appreciate those volunteers who get out there and spread the word. Let us know if you want to participate in a recruitment event by calling Nancy Molever at 506-5221.

Special thanks to CASA Volunteers **Jennifer Fail** and **Elaine Casey** for referring potential volunteers to the CASA program. Our volunteers are our best recruiters! Keep up the good work.

At an FCRB hearing, CASA **Rose Ruth** was amongst the parties recognized for her outstanding work. Rose is a great asset to the program...continually advocating and searching out solutions. Great job Rose.

**Mary Alice Aguilar** was commended at an FCRB Hearing for her involvement in the case. Thanks Mary Alice for being an ambassador for the program.

At a recent FCRB hearing CASA **Margo Fitts** was commended for her dedication to her CASA children. Recognizing the need for intervention, Margo has jumped in running on a case that needed it...Margo is setting the pace and helping us understand the efforts that will be needed for CASAs to jump into Model Court. While this is not a Model Court case, it was a case requiring her to be a quick study, dedicate the time and to become a relied upon member of the team in very short order. Margo has done a great job. Thank you Margo!

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### Support for Props. 400, 401 appreciated

Thank you for supporting Propositions 400 and 401. Although, it outlined positive arguments, voters need to understand that passage will have a favorable impact on the Juvenile Court's inadequate detention facilities that were built in the 1980s for 1990s. They are chronically 30 percent over physical capacity, and all indications are that the juvenile detention population will grow as the county grows.

We would hate to be in the position, as we were before school started, of having to release kids because the overcrowding was near 45 percent and was creating safety problems.

The Juvenile Court has been successful in helping youngsters: 70 percent never return, and the recidivism rate is going down. The success can be attributed to the court's aggressiveness in increasing its capacity to deliver programs that produce positive results, and detention is one of the tools that helps us protect the public, impose consequences and gives the opportunity to help the kid.

The passage of Propositions 400 and 401 will allow the court to expand its prevention, diversion and detention programs. So, as voters consider the merits of the measures, the court hopes that they don't forget the kids.

--Maurice Portley, Presiding Juvenile Court Judge  
Maricopa County - Mesa *Reprint from the AZ Republic, dated Friday, September 25, 1998.*

## POEM OF A CASA CHILD

I feel as if I am an empty bottle,  
Cast away into a stormy sea  
With no one there to comfort me.

Clashing with the rocks,  
Colliding with the waves  
Getting lost in the blackness.

No tears for crying, no heart to break,  
no fear of losing, no ego to crush,  
No love to lose.

Drifting. Drifting into deeper waters,  
No land in sight. Lost in the emptiness.

Sinking, Drowning.  
I call for help yet no one hears my cries  
I am lost.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Donnell Liem	1	Pat Isaac	17
Mary Fincher	3	Sam Wiggins	18
Sandra Price	3	Andrea McCoy	18
Debbie Donofrio	6	Roxanne Klein	18
Lucille Fraas	11	Sheila Matheson	22
Virginia Stone	13	Laura Owsley	24
Ray Bloyed	16	Monica Rodarte	27
Laura Lobraico	16	Virginia Wurtz	30

We at the CASA office wish to apologize to Elissa Sherwin for overlooking her birthday on 11-3-98. Happy Birthday Elissa!

### Domestic Violence and Children The Best Way to Protect the Children is to PROTECT THE MOTHER

Some children see the violence, while others hear screams, the breaking of glass and furniture, crying. The children always see the aftermath of the violence; the blood, the bruises, the broken bones.

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A survey of over 6,000 American families found that 50% of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently abused their children.



**CASA PROGRAM**  
**Juvenile Court Center**  
**3125 W. Durango, Suite 243**  
**Phoenix, AZ 85009**

Seventy-five percent of women who are battered in this country have children living at home

An estimated 3.3 to 10 million children witness domestic violence each year.

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When violence against the mother occurs, children suffer from low self-esteem, poor health, and sleeping difficulties. They are also at high risk for substance abuse, suicide, and sexual acting out.

Young children may experience delays in verbal development, poor motor ability, impaired cognitive abilities, delayed potty training, and fear of abandonment.

One third of women who are physically abused by a husband or a boyfriend grew up in a household where their mother was abused. About one in five of these women were abused themselves as children or teens.

Statistics show that boys who witness domestic violence are more likely to batter their intimate partners as adults.

In Arizona, police agencies representing 79% of Arizona's population found that children were present during approximately 25% of the reported cases of domestic violence. Numbers are likely much higher than reported. In a recent American Medical Association study, children witnessed the assault in 85% of the domestic violence cases. *\*Provided by the Workshop for Domestic Violence and a reprint from "The Special Advocate, Yuma, AZ, Oct/Nov 1998 Newsletter.*